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FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8963
INFO RUEHZH/HAITI COLLECTIVE PRIORITY
RUEHBR/AMEMBASSY BRASILIA PRIORITY 2089
RUEHSA/AMEMBASSY PRETORIA PRIORITY 1859
RUEHQU/AMCONSUL QUEBEC PRIORITY 1279
RUMIAAA/HQ USSOUTHCOM J2 MIAMI FL PRIORITY
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK PRIORITY 1651

UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 PORT AU PRINCE 001423

SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/EX AND WHA/CAR
S/CRS
INL FOR KEVIN BROWN AND ANGELIC YOUNG
SOUTHCOM ALSO FOR POLAD
STATE PASS AID FOR LAC/CAR
INR/IAA
WHA/EX PLEASE PASS USOAS

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: PREF PGOV HA PHUM

SUBJECT: HAITI MONTHLY: SEPTEMBER, 2008

REF: A. A) PORT AU PRINCE 520
1B. B) PORT AU PRINCE 1356

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11. (U) This message is sensitive but unclassified -- please protect accordingly.

12. (U) Summary: This is a monthly report on various topics of interest which do not merit a full reporting cable. End summary.

13. (U) PARLIAMENT PASSES AMENDED BUDGET. Both chambers of parliament voted the week of September 29 to approve the amended FY 2007-2008 budget. Haiti usually requires amended budgets late in the fiscal years because of the need to factor in changes in tax revenues, which are difficult for Haiti to predict earlier in the fiscal year. This year's amended budget contains modest increases for elections and public works, and an increase in borrowing necessitated by reduction in tax receipts caused largely by the four hurricanes and tropical storms that ravaged Haiti in August and September.

14. (SBU) SENATOR BOULOS AFFAIR CONTINUES TO SIMMER. A group of ten Senators on September 30 asked Senate President Kely Bastien to reconsider the case of former Senator Rudy Boulos (ref A). A Senate resolution of last March declared Boulos not a Senator by dint of his holding foreign nationality, but a regional court subsequently ruled that only the judicial branch has the authority to determine whether Boulos violated the constitutional ban on dual nationality. Senator Bastien said September 30 he would submit the issue to the Senate for discussion. Embassy doubts Boulos has the 16 votes he needs to be reinstated, since several Senators tell us that in pursuing their political careers, they passed up the chance to acquire foreign nationality (a highly sought-after line of escape in times of trouble), and will not allow Boulos to receive a pass.

15. (U) HAITI NEAR BOTTOM OF TRANSPARENCY INTERNATIONAL CORRUPTION RANKING. Haiti's ranking as the fourth most corrupt country in the world (ranking of 177 out of 180 countries, just ahead of Iraq and just behind Afghanistan) has caused some observers to question TI's methodology. Some note this is an index of perceptions rather than measurable parameters.

¶ 6. (U) MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE ANNOUNCES TWO SECRETARIES OF STATE. New Minister of Agriculture, Natural Resources and Rural Development (MARNDR) Joanas Gue announced September 24 the installation of two Secretaries of State as opposed to the traditional one. (Note: Gue is the former Secretary of State for MARNDR. End Note.) Secretary of State for Crop Agricultures Jean Claude Delice stated to the media that one of his priorities is rehabilitating agricultural infrastructure damaged by the August-September hurricanes (ref B). Secretary of State for Animal Husbandry Michel Chaney, who studied in Cuba, believes that integrating more Cuban-trained veterinarians into the MARNDR will help spur Haiti's development.

¶ 7. (SBU) FORMER PM ALEXIS NAMED NATIONAL COORDINATOR OF LESPWA COALITION. The leadership of Lespwa, the coalition of parties closely allied with President Rene Preval, announced the election on August 2 of former Prime Minister Jacques Edouard Alexis as "'National Coordinator' of the coalition. In a speech two weeks later to the national congress of Parti Louvri Barye (PLB), one of the principal component parties of Lespwa, Alexis announced that Lespwa would change from an 'electoral platform' to a 'political platform' on September 8, when its provisional statutes expired. A member of the executive committees of Lespwa and PLB told Poloff that the change would allow other political formations to join the Lespwa coalition. While Lespwa remains strong in the Senate, much of its power in the lower house has dissipated as many of its Deputies have affiliated themselves with the Cooperative of Progressive Parliamentarians.

¶ 8. (U) BRUTAL POLICE BEATING. Four Haitian National Police (HNP) officers were recently arrested for participating in

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the brutal beating of well-known Haitian actress, Natacha Jeune Saintil on September 24. The beating occurred after Saintil questioned police about her brother, who was recently arrested without a warrant. The Haitian Human Right's organization RNDDH expressed its outrage at the attack, and is publicly pressuring law enforcement authorities to quickly convict the four officers as well as other HNP officers who witnessed the crime but failed to intervene.

SANDERSON